

RESOLUTION NO. 20111020-055

WHEREAS, 29 cities in Texas have smoke-free parks and across the country nearly 534 cities have created smoke-free parks; and

WHEREAS, according to the Austin Fire Department, 9 out of 10 fires along our roadways are caused by cigarettes and at least 25% of all wildfires have been caused by cigarettes; and

WHEREAS, this year devastating fires occurred in Central Texas resulting in the loss of approximately 35,000 acres of land and 1,500 homes; and

WHEREAS, in March 2010 the Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department (ATCHHSD) received the Community Putting Prevention to Work Grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to address and make an impact on the leading killers in our community related to tobacco; and

WHEREAS, tobacco use is the number one cause of death and disability in Austin and Travis County, resulting in approximately eleven deaths per week and accounting for more deaths than heroine, cocaine, alcohol, AIDS, car accidents, fire, murder and suicide combined; and

WHEREAS, cigarettes and secondhand smoke contain more than 7,000 chemicals, including 69 known or suspected carcinogens such as cyanide, benzene, and radioactive polonium; and

WHEREAS, tobacco litter is the most common form of litter, and 37,717 cigarette butts have been collected from 38 Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) sites this year during five volunteer clean-up events, and cigarette butts can take up to ten years to decompose; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department invests a significant amount of time and effort annually to remove cigarette butts from PARC sites; and

WHEREAS, the chemicals from discarded cigarette butts pollute the land, lakes and waterways and can be ingested by children, animals, fish and birds; and

WHEREAS, smoke-free parks protect the health, safety and welfare of all community members; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of parks is to promote community wellness, and smoke-free parks create outdoor spaces more conducive for adults, children and families to play, participate in sports, and to relax; and

WHEREAS, the need to balance the benefits of smoking prohibition against the cost of enforcement may require that exceptions be made, particularly for special events and designated smoking locations; and

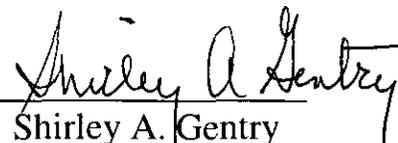
WHEREAS, The City of Austin already has a Smoking in Public Places Ordinance, but that ordinance does not prohibit smoking in City parks; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

That the City Manager is directed to draft an ordinance that prohibits smoking in City of Austin parks, including any recommended exceptions, provide the ordinance to the Parks and Recreation Board and the Golf Advisory Board for review, and present the ordinance to City Council for consideration by December 8, 2011.

ADOPTED: October 20, 2011

ATTEST:


Shirley A. Gentry
City Clerk